

Message Text

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R 022137Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4114

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 3 MEXICO 8388

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SUBJECT: MONTHLY POLITICAL HIGHLIGHTS-SEPTEMBER 1974

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: BEGINNING WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA'S FOURTH STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS ON THE 1ST, SEPTEMBER IN MEXICO WAS A MONTH OF RESOLUTION--ECHEVERRIA PRONOUNCED AND EVENTS WERE OBLIGINGLY OBEDIENT: THE ZUNO AND FIGUEROA KIDNAPPINGS CLIMAXED IN A WAY WHICH (ACCEPTING THE OFFICIAL VERSIONS) VINDICATED THE GOM HARD-LINE POLICY TOWARD KIDNAPPINGS AND WAGE NEGOTIATIONS AGREEMENT ON 22PCT INCREASE AVERTED A GENERAL STRIKE. ONE INTERESTING FOLLOW-UP TO THE INFORME WAS GOM CANCELLATION OF 37 TELEVISION PROGRAMS FOR THEIR ALLEGEDLY HIGH CONTENT OF VIOLENCE. IN THE ATTENDANT FANFARE, MEXICO ALMOST OVERLOOKED THE ATTEMPT AT LAUNCHING A NEW POLITICAL PARTY- THE MEXICAN PARTY OF WORKERS.-AND STATE POLITICS CONTINUED AS USUAL, WITH THE PRI REJECTING A FLAGRANT ATTEMPT AT NEPOTISM IN TAMAULIPAS WHILE SQUELCHING PPS CLAIMS OF ELECTORAL FRAUD IN VERACRUZ. MEANWHILE THE PAN DEMONSTRATED ITS OPPOSITION BY BRINGING CHARGES AGAINST FEDERAL DISTRICT OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR "REGULARIZING" THE TENANCY OF THE RESIDENTS OF A MEXICO CITY COLONIA. AT MONTH'S END PRESIDENT OF AUTHENTIC PARTY OF

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MEXICAN REVOLUTION GENERAL JUAN BARRAGAN DIED AT AGE 84. END

SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENTIAL INFORME

(A) IN ASSESSING ECHEVERRIA'S FOURTH STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS, SOME GENERAL REVIEW OF MEXICAN PRESIDENTIAL POLITICAL POWER IS HELPFUL. SOME OBSERVERS HAVE SEEN THE MEXICAN PRESIDENT AS ONE WHO IN ATTEMPTING TO MAINTAIN A FRAGILE CONSENSUS AMONG THE AMPRPHOUS SECTORS OF MEXICAN SOCIETY, BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE PRI, WAS LOATH TO TAKE ANY CONCERTED ACTION WHICH MIGHT UNDULY IMPINGE UPON ANY GIVEN SECTOR.

(B) OTHERS, BELIEVING THE PRESIDENT HAS MORE AFFIRMATIVE POWER TO PURSUE A GIVEN COURSE AND ABSORB POLITICAL FLAK, FAULT THIS ANALYSIS FOR ITS UNCRITICAL ACCEPTANCE OF A PRESUMED INTERNAL COHESION AMONG THE VARIOUS SECTORS AND FOR ITS FAILURE TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE PERSONALIZED NATURE OF MEXICAN POLITICS, I.E. LOYALTIES WHICH RUN UPWARD INSTEAD OF DOWNWARD TO THE CONSTITUENCY. SUPPORTERS OF THIS VIEW POINTED TO THE FAILURE OF THE PRI AGRARIAN SECTOR (THE PARTY'S MOST NUMEROUS) TO GAIN COMPENSATION FOR ITS UNSWERVING LOYALTY TO THE PRI AND THE ONLY MODERATELY MORE SUCCESSFUL LABOR SECTOR AS EVIDENCE THAT MEXICAN POLITICS IS NOT INSTITUTIONALIZED. THIS ANALYSIS PREDICTED THAT CONTINUED ECONOMIC PROSPERITY (AMONG OTHER FACTORS) WOULD LEAVE GOM-PRI LEADERSHIP ENOUGH FLEXIBILITY TO SATISFY THE CONCERNS OF ANY PARTICULAR GROUP IF AND WHEN THESE CONCERNS WERE BROUGHT TO BEAR POINTEDLY UPON GOVERNMENT POLICY.

(C) WE LEAN TOWARD THE LATTER VIEW BUT BELIEVE THAT INFLATION (FUELED, IRONICALLY, BY DEFICIT SPENDING DESIGNED TO DISTRIBUTE INCOME MORE EQUITABLY) IN MEXICO DURING THE PAST THREE YEARS HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL IN PRESIDENTIAL MANEUVERABILITY IN THE FACE OF COMPETING DEMANDS, AND THUS GIVE THE FORMER VIEW MORE CURRENCY. IT WAS AGAINST THIS GENERAL BACKGROUND, TOGETHER WITH THE SPECIFIC SITUATION (THREAT OF GENERAL STRIKE, KIDNAPPINGS OF A PRI SENATOR AND THE PRESIDENT'S FATHER-IN-LAW), THAT ECHEVERRIA ADDRESSED THE MEXICAN NATION ON SEPTEMBER 1.

(D) ALTHOUGH THIS, LIKE PREVIOUS INFORMES, WAS WEIGHTED MORE TOWARD PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS THAN FUTURE PLANS, TO EXTENT IT INDICATED POLICY DIRECTIONS IT PROMISED SOMETHING FOR ALMOST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EVERYONE (SEE MEXICO 7457)

(E) INFLATION, HOWEVER, IS NECESSARILY FORCING ECHEVERRIA TO CHOOSE, TO SOME EXTENT, BETWEEN HARD ALTERNATIVES. INFORME RHETORIC CAMOUFLAGED THIS REALITY NICELY, BUT BRIEF PORTION OF INFORME DEALING WITH ANTI-INFLATION MEASURES (INCLUDING FISCAL REFORM AND PRICE CONTROLS) GAVE BEST (ALTHOUGH STILL VAGUE) INDICATION OF WHO WILL PAY PRICE. AS PROPOSALS FOR FISCAL REFORM AND PRICE CONTROLS HAVE

BEEN SUBSEQUENTLY DESCRIBED, LATTER IS AROUSING STRONG OPPOSITION FROM BUSINESS SECTORS AND GOM COUNTERATTACK. FORMER, WITH TAXES ON LUXURY ITEMS, WILL HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON PROFIT MARGINS BUT WILL AFFECT ADVERSELY MIDDLE INCOME CLASSES NEWLY INTRODUCED TO PLEASURES OF CONSUMER SOCIETY. IN INTERVIEW WITH LE MONDE CORRESPONDENT SEPT 27, ECHEVERRIA MADE THIS POINT CLEARLY. TO LE MONDE'S COMMENT THAT MIDDLE CLASS WAS MOST AFFECTED BY ANTI-INFLATION PROGRAM, ECHEVERRIA REPLIED THIS WAS TRUE IN PART; RECOGNIZING "LEGITIMATE" ASPIRATIONS OF MIDDLE CLASS HE CRITICIZED UNNECESSARY CONSUMPTION, CONFIRMED THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD ESTABLISH OBSTACLES AGAINST SUCH IMPORTATIONS.

(F) ADVERSE EFFECT ON MIDDLE CLASSES OF TAX REFORM MAY BE REASON WHY THIS INFORME SO NATIONALISTIC AND EMOTIONAL IN TONE. THE EXALTATION OF NATIONAL VALUES, THE AMBIGUOUSLY DESCRIBED "EXTERNAL THREAT/ AND SINISTER REACTIONARY FORCES, THE PLEDGE TO MAINTAIN ORDER THROUGH THE LAW, THE IMPROVISATIONS AND SINGING OF NATIONAL ANTHEM ALL HAVE THEIR EFFECT ON THE AVERAGE, NATIONALISTIC MIDDLE CLASS MEXICAN. THUS WE SEE THE INFORME AS AN EFFORT TO GAIN THE SUPPORT OF THOSE MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO SUCH APPEALS, WHO ALSO HAPPEN TO BE THOSE MOST AFFECTED BY ECONOMIC POLICY INNOVATIONS AND LEAST ORGANIZED EITHER WITHIN OR WITHOUT THE PRI. AN APPEAL TO MEXICAN NATIONALISM AND PATRIOTISM WE JUDGE IS EASILY INVOKED OR EXPLOITED VIS A VIS OUTSIDERS. IT IS NOT SO EASILY EXPLOITED ON AN ESSENTIALLY DOMESTIC ISSUE SUCH AS INFLATION. DESPITE PRESIDENT'S ATTEMPT TO ATTRIBUTE INFLATION TO EXTERNAL FACTORS AND ALTHOUGH TRUE PUBLIC ATTITUDE IS DIFFICULT TO GAUGE IN LIGHT OF PRO FORMA PUBLIC TELEGRAMS OF SUPPORT AND EFFUSIVE RESPONSE OV VARIOUS GROUPS AND SECTORS, WE DOUBT HIS RHETORIC WILL WASH FOR LONG.

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3. ZUNO AND FIGUEROA KIDNAPPINGS

SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION THESE TWO KIDNAPPINGS LEFT GOVERNMENT IN POSITION HAVING GAINED FROM SITUATION AT TIME OF INFORME AND WON FURTHER BY SECURING RELEASED WITHOUT COMPROMISING HARD LINE POLICY. DILEMMA IN ZUNO CASE OF EXPLAINING WHY HE WAS RELEASED IF NO DEALS WERE MADE GOM HANDLED BY STATEMENTS THAT KIDNAPPERS YIELDED IN FACE OF HARD LINE POLICY, PUBLIC OUTCRY, AND POLICE INVESTIGATION. FIGUEROA CASE, WHERE OFFICIAL VERSION WAS THAT HE RESCUED IN ARMY SHOOTOUT, CONTAINED NO SUCH OBVIOUS INNER CONTRADICTION. THUS, NO FURTHER DETAILS HAVE BEEN FORTHCOMING, NOR DO WE EXPECT ANY.

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4. WAGE SETTLEMENT

(A) THREAT OF GENERAL STRIKE WAS AVERTED WHEN TRI-PARTITE (LABOR-GOVERNMENT-MANAGEMENT) NEGOTIATIONS AGREED ON "GUIDELINES" OF 22PERCENT INCREASE IN SALARIES OF UNIONIZED WORKERS. MOST EMPLOYEES UNDER CONTRACT WITH TRADE UNIONS PEACEFULLY ACCEPTED INCREASE, BUT SOME NEGOTIATIONS, TWICE EXTENDED UNTIL VARIOUS DATES IN OCTOBER, MAY YET EVOLVE INTO STRIKE SITUATIONS. WE HAVE INFORMATION THAT MANY IN-BOND BORDER PLANTS, SOME HOTELS, AND SOME TEXTILE AND GARMENT FACTORIES MAY BE ON STRIKE THIS WEEK; HOWEVER, NO VIOLENCE IS EXPECTED.

(B) ALTHOUGH LABOR BEGAN WITH 42PCT WAGE INCREASE DEMAND, IT CANNOT BUT BE PLEASED WITHOUTCOME OF THIS, THE THIRD UNSCHEDULED INCREASE IN JUST TWELVE MONTHS. ONE COMMENTATOR NOTED THAT LABOR SEEMS TO BE SLIPPING OUT OF PRI'S CONTROL. ON OTHER HAND, STANDING OF LABOR SECRETARY WITH PRESIDENT IS PROBABLY ENHANCED BY HIS HANDLING OF NEGOTIATIONS AND AVOIDANCE OF GENERAL STRIKE, WHICH, WHILE NEVER REALLY EXPECTED, WAS A POSSIBILITY.

5. GOM CANCELS TV PROGRAMS

(A) IN HIS INFORME SEPT 1, PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA ATTRIBUTED TO MEDIA IN GENERAL AND TELEVISION IN PARTICULAR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRESENT CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE IN MEXICO. ON SEPT 23, DIRECTION GENERAL OF CINEMATOGRAPHY (SECRETARIAT OF GOVERNMENT) ANNOUNCED CANCELLATION OF 37 TELEVISION PROGRAMS, ALL BUT ONE OR TWO US, TO BE EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 30.

(B) ALTHOUGH MANY COMMENTATORS APPROVED THIS ACTION, SOME EXPRESSED CONCERN AT ARBITRARY WAY IN WHICH MOVE WAS TAKEN AND CAUTIONED THAT GREATER CENSORSHIP COULD FOLLOW. ONLY PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCE IS LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT OF SOME 400 MEXICAN ACTORS WHO DUBBED THE SERIES. INCLUDED ARE: FBI, THE UNTOUCHABLES, KUNG FU, MANNIX, THE FUGITIVE, DRAGNET. SOME OBSERVERS ALSO NOTED THAT JAPANESE FILMS, EXCEPTIONAL FOR THEIR VIOLENCE, WERE UNAFFECTED. (C) PRINCIPAL SIGNIFICANCE THIS DEVELOPMENT APPEARS TO BE ANOTHER INDICATION OF PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY, PARTICULARLY WHEN ACTION DOES NOT IMPINGE UPON ANY VESTED INTEREST GROUP AND WHEN IT IMPLIES CONDEMNATION OF FOREIGN (US) CULTURAL INFLUENCES.

6. PARTIDO MEXICANO DE LOS TRABAJADORES (PMT)

(A) BEGINNING ON SEPT 5 THE HEBERTO CASTILLO GROUP HELD A 5-DAY NATIONAL CONSTITUENT CONGRESS, CONCLUDING ON SEPT 9 WITH ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORMATION OF THE MEXICAN PARTY OF WORKERS AND ITS INTENTION TO OBTAIN REGISTRATION. NATIONAL SECRETARY FOR ORGANIZATION DEMETRIO VALLEJO, WHO OPTIMISTIC PARTY WOULD BE REGISTERED, TOLD EMBOFF PARTY WOULD CONCENTRATE RECRUITMENT EFFORTS ON VAST MAJORITY OF APOLITICAL, WORKING MEXICANS (A CATEGORY INCLUDING STUDENTS, CAMPESINOS, AND INTELLECTUALS) IN ATTEMPT TO POLITICIZE THIS AS YET UNTAPPED SOURCE OF POTENTIAL OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PRI.

(B) MOST POLITICAL OBSERVERS CONSIDER PMT LAUNCHING A NON-EVENT AND ASSUME ITS LEADERS ARE ON THE DOLE. ATTENDANCE OF PABLO ECHEVERRIA, SON OF PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, AS "FRATERNAL DELEGATE" MAY HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO DISCREDIT PMPT'S LEFTIST CREDENTIALS. SOME LEFTIST COMMENTATORS HAVE CRITICIZED SLOPPY DRAFTING OF DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND LAMENT PMT'S POOR BEGINNING WHILE PROFESSING SUPPORT FOR IDEAS OF NEW, LEFTIST PARTY.

(C) ONE INDEPENDENT OBSERVER, WHILE CONCEDED PMPT MAY BE PRETTY TAME OPPOSITION, NONETHELESS THOUGHT IT MIGHT HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOME SUCCESS WITH UNORGANIZED WORKERS IN THE LOWER MIDDLE CLASS AND AN OFFICIAL OF NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY (UNAM) SAID PMT IS HARD AT WORK RECRUITING ON UNAM CAMPUS. AIRGRAM WITH FURTHER ANALYSIS IN PREPARATION.

7. PRI RESPONDS TO POPULAR SENTIMENT IN TAMAULIPAS

(A) TAMAULIPAS RECENTLY WAS THE SCENE OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY WHICH SHEDS SOME LIGHT ON THE QUESTION OF PRI SELECTION CANDIDATES IN STATE ELECTION. THE PRI CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR (SEE A-353 OF JULY 31, 1973, ENRIQUE CARDENAS GONZALEZ, AS EARLY AS AUGUST 5 WAS REPORTED BY ANCOMSUL MATAMOROS TO HAVE AMBITIONS OF HAVING HIS BROTHER, JORGE, RECEIVE APPOINTMENT AS PRI CANDIDATE FOR MUNICIPAL PRESIDENT OF MATAMOROS. FOLLOWING PROTESTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITIES OVER SLATE OF CANDIDATES RECOMMENDED BY ENRIQUE GONZALEZ, PRI ANNOUNCED ITS SLATE, WHICH EXCLUDED JORGE CARDENAS AND MOST OF THE ENRIQUE CARDENAS PROPOSED SLATE. ALTHOUGH JORGE PREVIOUSLY HAD DECLARED HE WOULD ACCEPT PARTY DECISION, HE SUBSEQUENTLY ANNOUNCED IN A PUBLIC MEETING HIS DECISION TO BOW TO "POPULAR DEMAND" AND REGISTER AS CANDIDATE OF THE PARTIDO AUTENTICO DE LA REVOLUCION MEXICANA (PARM), A TRICK WHICH IN 1973 HAD WORKED FOR REJECTED PRI ASPIRANT CANTU ROSAS, WHO WENT ON TO WIN IN NUEVO LAREDO ON THE PARM TICKET. HOWEVER, PARM HEADQUARTERS REFUSED TO ACCEPT JORGE CARDENAS' CANDIDACY, EXPLAINING HE HAD NEVER BEFORE BEEN A PARM MEMBER.

(B) WE INTERPRET THIS INCIDENT TO MEAN THAT ALTHOUGH A PRI GOVERNATORIAL CANDIDATE CAN EXERCISE CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE OVER SELECTION OF LOCAL CANDIDATES, THERE OCCASIONALLY ARE LIMITS BEYOND WHICH THE PRI WILL NOT GO IN DEFYING WELL DEFINED LOCAL SENTIMENT AND THAT, WHEN NOT TAKEN BY SURPRISE, PRI INFLUENCE OVER PARM IS SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE A PARTY DECISION IS NOT THWARTED BY THE REJECTED CANDIDATE SWITCHING PARTIES.

8. CATCH-22 IN VERACRUZ

(A) ON SEPT 8 VERACRUZ HELD ELECTIONS FOR GOVERNOR AND 16 STATE DEPUTIES. THE PARTIDO POPULAR SOCIALISTA (PPS), WHO HAD SUPPORTED THE PRI CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR (SEE MEXICO A-267, JUNE 5, 1974) IMMEDIATELY PROTESTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALLEGED ELECTORAL FRAUD IN 6 OF THE 16 OTHER RACES- INCLUDING INTIMIDATION OF VOTES AND STUFFING BALLOT BOXES. PPS LEADER ALSO CHARGED POLICE WITH THE MURDER OF MACEDONIO CAZABON, WHO ALLEGEDLY WAS PROTESTING STUFFING OF BALLOT BOXES. THE LATTER CHARGE PRI LEADER IN VERACRUZ RAMOS GURRION IMMEDIATELY DENIED, SAYING THAT CAZABON WAS NOT A PPS MEMBER, RATHER A DRUNK WHO POLICE ARRESTED FOR DISTURBING THE PEACE AND WHO COMMITTED SUICIDE IN JAIL.

(B) PSS PROCEEDED TO FILE FORMAL CHARGES OF FRAUD WITH STATE ELECTORAL COMMISSION BUT THESE WERE DISALLOWED, BECAUSE, ACCORDING TO GURRION, A PARTY HAS TO ACHIEVE AT LEAST ONE-

FOURTH OF VOTES CAST TO GAIN STANDING NECESSARY TO BRING CHARGES
OF FRAUD.

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9. PAN BRINGS CHARGES AGAINST FEDERAL DISTRICT OFFICIALS
CHARGES BY TWO PAN DEPUTIES OF IRREGULARITIES IN FEDERAL
DISTRICT HANDLING CLAIM OF RESIDENTS IN MEXICO CITY SUBURB
RESULTED IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES "INVESTIGATION" OF MATTER
SEPT 20. PRESS REPORTED PAN DEPUTIES "APPEARED TO HAVE
FORGOTTEN" THEIR CHARGES WHEN FACE TO FACE WITH THOSE THEY
ACCUSED, BUT ONE PAN MEMBER INVOLVED TOLD EMBOFF OBJECTIVE
WAS TO PUT OFFICIALS ON RECORD WITH PROMISES TO REGULARIZE
TENANCY OF RESIDENTS INVOLVED AND TO PROVIDE CITY SERVICES
(LIGHT, WATER, SEWAGE ETC.) AT REASONABLE COST. HE VIEWED
TACTIC AS SUCCESSFUL, AS DID ALSO PRI POLITICIAN WHO
LAMENTED THAT PRI "SLOWLY LOSING FEDERAL DISTRICT."

10. DEATH OF PARM PRESIDENT GENERAL JUAN BARRAGAN
GENERAL JUAN BARRAGAN, PRESIDENT OF AUTHENTIC PARTY OF
MEXICAN REVOLUTION, DIED SEPT 30 AT AGE OF 84. BARRAGAN
HAD BEEN PRESIDENT SINCE 1966, WHEN FOUNDER (IN 1954) AND
PRESIDENT GENERAL JACINTO B. TREVINO DIED. PERENNIAL CLOSE
AFFILIATION TO PRI ILLUSTRATED BY FACT THAT PRESIDENT
ECHEVERRIA AND GOVERNMENT SECRETARY MOYA PALENCIA ACTED AS
PALLBEARERS AT BARRAGAN FUNERAL. FEDERAL DEPUTY, (AT LARGE),

ALEJANDRO MUJICA MONTOYA, PARM SEC GEN, SUCCEEDS TO LEADERSHIP.

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11. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

RABASA TOURS NEAR EAST AND AFRICA
FONSEC RABASA DEPARTED MEXICO ON A TRIP WHICH WILL TAKE
HIM TO ALGERIA (SEPT 24-27), EGYPT (SEPT 27-30), SAUDI ARABIA
(SEPT 30-OCT 5), TANZANIA (OCT 6-8), AND SENEGAL (OCT 8-9).
PURPOSES OF THIS TRIP ARE TO PREPARE FOR A PROBABLY VISIT BY
PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA TO THE AREA, TO GAIN SUPPORT BOTH FOR
CHARTER OF ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND DUTIES AND FOR LOCATING THE
HEADQUARTERS OF THE WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION IN
MEXICO CITY, AND POSSIBLY TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS WITH ADDITIONAL ARAB AND AFRICAN NATIONS.
RABASA WILL RETURN VIA PARIS, WHERE HE PROBABLY WILL
MEET WITH GOF OFFICIALS, AND NEW YORK (ETA OCT 11), WHERE
HE WILL ATTEND THE UNGA.

12. JAPAN'S PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO MEXICO
PRIME MINISTER TANAKA'S VISIT TO MEXICO SEPT 12-15
WAS HIGHLY PUBLICIZED AND WELL RECEIVED. ONLY NEW
INITIATIVE BROUGHT TO FRUITION DURING VISIT WAS GOJ
COMMITMENT OF \$1 MILLION TO ESTABLISH A JOINT MEXICAN-
JAPANESE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE IN MEXICO.
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